

## Le théâtre traversé: a traversed theater<sup>1</sup>

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The field of theater is infinite. This is not a pretentious statement, a form of pride, of megalomania, or of theosophy that would present the theater expert as the harbinger of a discipline more sublime than others, the signatory of a Faustian theoretical pact with the devil. The field of theater is only bound by the language that gives it an unlimited potential for significance. And this power is extremely problematic. In the environment of the "West," and particularly in the case of France, "theater" simultaneously signifies a space and a city building, a scene, or more specifically the place of scenic representation, in short, a literary genre most often described as "dramatic." But the most common metaphors, entirely lexicalized, attach to the word "theater" extended and sometimes disproportionate resonances. The "theater of operations" is a military place of military combat or police operations. Like "comedy" or "cinema," the "theater" implies an attitude of untruth, exaggeration, or bad faith that each individual can adopt in an inter-subjective relationship. Hence, as what we call today the "game of make-believe", "theater" can designate whatever game a child can play - cops and robbers, doctor and patient, etc. It always suggests the doubly fictional and spectacular potential of the word in which it is invested. And it is precisely this power that philosophical language itself uses. In the most canonical texts of antiquity, as in the most recent texts of deconstruction, the use of the word "theater" is rarely questioned as such. Rather, it is employed on the side of the human sciences, as sociologist Erving Goffmann

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<sup>1</sup> Trans. note. I have left the first part of the title in the French original, since, in English, the adjective 'traversed' is a bit cumbersome to lead off with, and doesn't immediately solicit the connotations that *traversé* or *atravessado* (Portuguese) do of actively modifying as well as being directional. Hereafter, however, the term remains "traversed theater" perhaps forcing a bit in English the strong connotation of what hybridizing traces this process of intersecting elements leaves, and on the residual dialogue within the theatre of its traces as it constructs something new or different from the sum of its parts, influences and innovations.

did when he elaborated a “theory of everyday life scenario” in his 1959 book *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. During World War II, while writing *Being and Nothingness* in a celebrated Parisian cafe, Jean-Paul Sartre had already used the metaphor of the waiter’s theatrical role to develop a theory of behavior. So many variants, ultimately, of the “great theater of the world,” where a metaphysical assumption obtains that has not yet been thoroughly theoretically deconstructed.

We find ourselves thus caught between two traps: one reduced to the postulation of a pact of adhesion between the stage as a closed place of fiction with the audience as an ephemeral community of converging attentions; the other a pact that opens up the field of theater to conjunctures of social considerations. This coming and going could give one vertigo if it did not oblige us to define, each time and in every place and every moment of the world, what we mean by “theater.” In other words — remembering representations of the Elizabethan theater and the Spanish comedy of the Golden Age in the courtyards of inns; the ritual ceremonies of an African or American group or of a particular Balinese community; the royal ballets in the gardens of Versailles; the Dadaists shows in cafes and cabarets, etc. — we see that theater was practiced in spaces we can call ‘extraterritorial’ to the common idea of an enclosed theatrical space. What we need to define, at the moment, or at least since 1979 when Rosalind Krauss’s published her article on “sculpture in the expanded field,” is theater in its expanded field. One could, moreover, discuss the implications of these two reciprocal enunciations in an art such as Tadeusz Kantor’s, for example, where the expansion of the sculptural field is precisely the expansion of the theatrical field. One would also need to define all the conditions that determine or at least predisposed the postmodern theatrical field to expand in the contemporary context, a context that I would have no hesitation to qualify not as post-dramatic, but rather as post-modern (1979: also the year that Jean-François Lyotard’s *The Postmodern Condition* was published.) However, this would be a huge and necessary challenge beyond the scope of this article. We can try, however, to approach this issue through a notion that I would call the Théâtre traversé (Traversed theater).<sup>2</sup>

What is this theater that we can describe as “traversed”? It is a purely abstract

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<sup>2</sup> I would like to say that this notion, a concept ‘in progress,’ was ‘invented’ in agreement with José da Costa, the translator of this text from French to Portuguese.

view of a space of representation that involves bodies and languages. Thus in this sense, this theater can take place in theaters but also in museums, houses, galleries, basements, warehouses, abandoned or active factories, hospitals, tents, shopping centers, public squares, streets, in no man's lands, quarries, beaches, rivers, riverbanks, boats, buses, parking lots, pools, bathrooms, screens ... The list, of course, is not closed. It confirms, if that were necessary, the unlimited nature of the field of representation. It translates the continuing immense fortune and wealth of scenarios of the last several decades, which we could inadequately call the externalization of the theater, and since theater is always-already externalized, it leads us to recognize the extent to which this list of venues has expanded and been intensely used in these postmodern times.

On the other hand, the rampant acceleration of technological discoveries, particularly electronic, also projected theater into a kind of reverse movement, centered again in the protection of its rooms and spaces, in the comfortable conditions in which it could, with an adapted architecture and with always renewed equipment, expand into new laboratory experiments. Thus theater found itself traversed, intersecting increasingly with the other arts (mime, dance, circus, puppets, video, mobile or industrial sculpture...) to the point of creating new categories by concatenation (the dance theater, theater of objects) or globalization (performance) - and particularly, since the last quarter century, by what we call the new technology, in the form of intermediality, of transmediality in order to produce another new concept - the "amplified actor." In this case, the stage is literally traversed by cables, by streaming, by drones, waves, screens. The electronic processes play with reception and particularly with the spectators' perceptions.

There would thus be two movements, a centrifugal one and another centripetal movement of theatrical traversal: a world that is declared theater from the moment when a performance placing bodies and languages in play is created there before the attention of a declared audience or passersby; and a theater that declares itself world from the moment that sophisticated technology can represent virtually whatever bodies and language, in modalities that blur the paradigms of reality and fiction. But this opposition is falsifying, the result of scientific convenience (it's easier to try new technologies in a closed and equipped space); economic convenience (it's easier to tour on a network of identified rooms); and/or political convenience

(it is easier if a company's work can be classified as being, for instance, street theater, or site-specific). These distinctions are neither reliable nor durable, although its determinations are infinitely understandable: they preserve autonomy and the creative economy. What I mean to say by this is that one needs to think of these issues, since the traversed theater is inseparable from its conditions of production, dissemination and representation.

What do these two seemingly opposite movements - centrifugal and centripetal - have in common, besides their contemporaneity? Concretely, one can observe that new technologies may also easily be invested in outdoor sites and the site-specific can also, in turn, invest in the dark rooms of enclosed spaces, by way of bringing in their own materials, by installation or by the virtual reproduction of its material universe and its spatiotemporal conditions. In one case as in the other, the theater is traversed by social and political issues, the geography of art, the politics of writing, decision processes, the speech of the spectators ... And it is this porosity, this blurring of boundaries that serves to intermesh the identity of the two perceived movements.

Fredric Jameson gives the postmodern space two qualities: homogeneity and fragmentation. This curious and paradoxical fragmentary homogeneity characterizes quite well the theatrical field "traversed theater." The last half-century has seen, throughout the world, theater come out of the theater and develop a necessary disbelief regarding the confined space of the old stage, enclosed in a building, the stage frontally facing the public in a dark room. This disbelief is completely connected to what Jean-François Lyotard, to define the postmodern idiosyncrasy, calls disbelief regarding meta-narratives. The constitution of the fourth wall at the turn of the twentieth century had everything to do with a didactic, pedagogical and moral will: Stanislavski, for example, speaks of "re-educating" the public (Stanislavski, 1997, p. 43). In his case, this goes through a new repertoire for a particular artistic conception of space, lighting and sound effects and, above all, by an increase in the actor's performance to the level of the dense and lofty characters of literature, an artistic elevation that rests on a method in which the actor's own "belief" in the role has a key place. The desire to delight the viewer then rests on two other grounds: the idealistic belief in an almost mechanical transmission of the artistic message (I experience it therefore I transmit it; I convey it, therefore

I am; I speak and the message is heard). In terms of the audience, the assumption is that it receives as one (the public is a singular mass; it listens, therefore it is; it grows in understanding therefore it is morally elevated). For Stanislavski - a contemporary of the abolition of slavery and close to revolutionary milieu - the "art theater" aims towards the modern emancipation of the public. From this perspective, one can say that the Brechtian fragmentation of time and theater space (diverse interruptions of dramatic action, suppression of the fourth wall, diversification and dissemination of representational media) points to a pre-post-modernity. Although Brecht still believed in the Marxist meta-narrative and its effectiveness, the essence of his artistic gesture rests on the notion that transmission passes through an exhibition, an explanation and a gap (estrangement) of the signs of representation. However, it is evident that performance radicalizes postmodern disbelief. In its most extreme end, the purity of its logic, performance disrupts common time and traverses public space in an unexpected way. It is irreducible to the idea of repetition as well as to that of representation. To resume the formulations of Jacques Rancière, it distributes the sensible, proposing a division and redistribution of the sensible, without which no viewer could appropriate its message. Clearly, it aims toward new modes of subjectivity.

When, after several in situ theater experiences (church, hospital, prison), the Teatro da Vertigem (Vertigo Theater) sought to emphasize its reflection on the history of Brazil, it decided to literally traverse the nation's vast territory.<sup>3</sup> This trip took members of the company to Brasília, a poor neighborhood on the outskirts of Brazil's largest city, São Paulo; to Brasília, the 'new' national capital inaugurated in 1960 in the middle of nowhere; and to Brasília, a small country town, located further to the west, on the border with Bolivia. The goal of the trip was to gather material, meet people, and develop practical workshops with them. Bernardo Carvalho, the playwright, developed step by step the future play script, *BR3*, on which the actors would improvise. Back in São Paulo, the company's headquarters, the group decided to 'stage' the play in the environs of the Tietê River. Running through degraded areas of the capital, flanked by multi-lane highways and the victim of a disproportionate pollution, the river acted as site for the production. Spec-

<sup>3</sup> This paragraph is indebted to the research of Guillaume Pinçon and his unpublished dissertation *Antropophagie du dehors: étude de théâtralités contemporaines au Brésil* [Anthropophagy of the outside: a study of contemporary Brazilian theatricalities] (Pinçon, 2013).

tators watched from a boat, while action took place both inside the boat as well as on the banks of the Tietê. The development of inland waterway routes underlies the production's story-line. For Antônio Araújo, the company's director, to choose the Rio Tietê as site is "to drown in disease." He expresses this in a 2005 interview:

More important than resignifying the river as a theatrical space for me is the re-sensitization of the river for the viewer. This river is a river-sewer. To look at the shit, to see the shit, and that shit is also our identity. As much as we want the modernist project as our identity - I'm not saying it is not, it has a megalomania there that is our identity - but the shit is also our identity. I think that the river evidences this (Audio; Fernandes, 2006. P.25).<sup>4</sup>

Araújo evokes here both a concrete and abstract situation. The unbearable odors due to river pollution (industrial fluids, various waste, animal carcasses...) leave the spectators feeling ill, sometimes almost to the point of fainting. The scenes that take place successively on the pier, in the boat or on the river allow the spectators to follow the saga of a family going back to the 1960s, from Brasília to Brasília and Brasília: through a spectral account of a family's (mis)fortunes, the scenes revert back to one of the founding moments in the recent history of the country, based on a paradoxical ideology, in a double movement of construction and devastation. This double movement is how the performance manifests the modernist mirage: the "fifty years of progress in five years," proclaimed by President Kubitschek was ensured by the deplorable working conditions and assassinations of workers; realizing the modern motto of the nation "order and progress", borrowed from Comtean positivism, came at the price of the development and concentration of slums where, for better or worse, those abandoned by "order and progress" survive. So, what the audience for *BR3* traverses is simultaneously a polluted river, a garbage metaphor, a metonymy of waste, and a counter product of modernist ideology. The "rehabilitation of the river as a theatrical space" (Antônio Araújo) thus realizes a theater traversed by its own history, the history of the country, by the reconstruction of that history as fiction. Spectators are invited to experience a place that had never been perceived as such and to question its historicity as well as their own. The theater that the river becomes is traversed by these acts, these

<sup>4</sup> Interview, 9 Oct. 2005.

performances, these notably organic constructions (actors, texts, bodies, cries, voices), scenography (scenes on the banks, built structures, scaffolds) and sounds (broadcast recordings, use of microphones, sound reinforcements).

There is a "distribution of the sensible," a requalification and a redistribution of what is perceivable, a reinvention of the conceivable; an interrogation of history that casts a permanent disturbance in relation to categories of reality and fiction, the brute fact and reflective essay, past and present. The audience is invited and even enjoined to wonder about who 'owns' history, each in his own manner, by space, movement and confinement: there is an initial surge of strength, taking the bus to an unexpected place, getting them in this place as they come down from the bus, amid sounds of gunfire, having them enter into a boat that is presented as a former cinema transformed into a church, embarking them on a path from which they can not escape, unlike a concert hall. Indeed, according to a variety of criteria such as social class, urban or national origin, the very everyday life of each one, each spectator perceives this story in a different way. For example, what would a São Paulo spectator think about a presentation in São Paulo? What would a Carioca - a person who lives in Rio - be thinking about during a presentation in Rio de Janeiro, where the show was transported, processed, and interpreted this time, not on a river, but in a port area of the bay of Guanabara? What would a foreign spectator think who saw one of these performances? The traversed theater directs itself to the forms and modalities of our subjectivities with great material intensity.

To recompose history, redistribute the sensible. It is to such a venture that that the Berlin group has been dedicated, repeatedly and cyclically, for a decade. The group consists of two videographic artists from the city of Anvers (Belgium), Bart Baele and Yves Degryse (originally three, with Caroline Rochlitz), who conceive the presentation of their work in a theatrical way. In *Tagfish*, for example, viewers enter a theater room (dark room, with a frontal disposition) and are facing an oval table installed along the scenario. Seven seats are facing the spectators along the oval curve. They wait for the guests of a conference that will never physically arrive, only virtually: at the backrests of the chairs there are elongated screens that receive the virtual participants.

Thus, the conference takes place following the projection of previously conducted interviews. The issue at hand is to discuss a restructuring project of a deactivated

post-industrial site in the Rhineland (a nearby region of the Rhine in Germany) into a new city with housing, schools, luxury hotels, parks with children's playgrounds... The project's protagonists were interviewed by Bart Baele and Yves Degryse. Their interventions alternate with images filmed on the site. In effect, a form of video documentary, drama. The spectators do not move in the environment. It is the environment that comes to them and that monopolizes the scene through the screens. The theater is simultaneously traversed by the images of the locality and by the social, political and economic horizon that the device brings into play. This device literally produces and reproduces the real. It selects out images from the natural and urban reality - images of bodies and clothing, images of languages - to arrange them and distribute them to viewers. In the purest of phenomenological postulates, the work on perception engages with a companion interrogation regarding conception: it demands an elaboration or a reworking of the ways of understanding. In twelve years, the company created nine shows. Three of them fall into a cycle entitled *Horror Vaccui*; the other six deal with portraits of cities, in a cycle named *Holoceen*. Several of the portraits do not take place in theaters. One devoted to Moscow, for example, takes place in a kind of red tent, a traveling structure that can be installed in the public square; the one dedicated to Iqaluit, capital of a territory in the Canadian northwest, is diffused under a thin metal dome with openings that can be mounted in a museum, a gallery, or any space capable of receiving it. In both pieces, the screens are placed in locations and at totally different heights, although, unlike what happens in *Tagfish*, no spectator can see all the screens at the same time, unless he had a strong divergent strabismus and eyes in the back of his head.

Thus, potentially, the aesthetics of the Berlin group not only engages issues of filming, editing, cutting and the recomposition of reality, but also a fragmentation of the visible: an anti-totalitarian visual device that characterizes pretty well the fragmentary homogeneity that Jameson attributes to postmodern space. It is, as such, the theater that makes this space, blurring the boundaries between reality and fiction, disturbing modes of perception, offering new ways of conceiving the real. The way in which theater intersects with the technological device produces an alteration in our representations of this reality that we share, that surrounds us, that we step out into and breathe as we leave the performance. It addresses the



politics of our subjectivization. We are ourselves, each one of us, whether we formulate this or not, whether or not we be actors in our own formulations as we are traversed by sociological, economic and anthropological challenges of the politics of our subjectivizations. And the panel that the Berlin group proposes, expanding to another city each year, invites us also to this subjective re-elaboration, the choice of cities and histories they contain. Thus we pass quickly from Jerusalem, materially traversed by the Israeli-Palestinian division; Zvisdal, small Ukrainian city nearby to Chernobyl where only an old couple who refused to flee the “collateral” devastation of the Soviet modernization myth (and more broadly, globalized) still remains; or Moscow, capital of a BRICS submissive to the dark powers of despotism and the mafia; to Bonanza, a former mining town in Colorado (United States), where there are still seven people who detest one another, a documented version of Lars Von Trier’s *Dogville*.

I would like to address the case of most complex device than the Berlin group has elaborated up until now, the production entitled *Land’s End*. The subject is a simple fait divers, a brief news story, of tragicomic features: the murder of a Belgian known as the “king of pancakes” commissioned by his wife and carried out by a Frenchman who lived on the other side of the border. The border will be precisely the issue of confrontation between the witnesses. This takes place in a farm interestingly traversed by the boundary, since a part of the building is in Belgium and another in France, certain rooms themselves being divided between the two countries. To evoke this fait divers and to help us apprehend all its psychological, legal and political complexities, Bart Baele and Yves Degryse conceived a piece that could be produced in any indoors space, whether or not a “theater,” which begins with a walk through various installations and continues with a video projection during which moments of “theater” interfere with dramatic actors proclaiming text in the flesh.<sup>5</sup> Viewers first enter into a large room where they are exposed to various objects: a dismantled car, some booths equipped with headphones, a structure of mechanical gears ... They go through another small room in which other objects and some screens are placed around before coming, through the aisles into a theater stage, where they find the last objects - a collective washstand, a large table,

<sup>5</sup> I, for instance, saw the production in the Maison de la Culture (House of Culture) in Amiens, France. And the way in which the ambulatory trajectory was organized in three rooms of this space is what I describe here. However, it can be presented differently in other locales, but always with the same elements and the same temporality.

a set of screens and bleachers in which they are asked to seat themselves. All the environments along this walk that lasts around twenty minutes may initially, as a whole, seem gratuitous. However, they really represent elements of the puzzle of the criminal intrigue that will be shown and explained to viewers in the second part the performance, the "spectacle" itself. While, in the bleachers, spectators are in front of twelve screens. Eight form a solid frame of four sides, and are similar to human dimension in height; each panel being composed of two vertical screens of approximately thirty centimeters by one meter placed one on top of another. Lined up before us, they form a wall or a screen background. Four other screens, some distance from the wide central grouping, slightly receding, were installed on the sides: two to the left, two to the right, also with one screen placed on top of the other here, offering a kind of counterpoint to the spectator, and playing with the limits of what is out of the field of vision. Projected images make different protagonists in the case intervene, interrogated a few years after the fact. They often appear barefoot in each solid panel of four sides, even responding one to another, as in the *Tagfish* conference. We also watched a newscast on this farm curiously situated on the border. But suddenly, the device becomes more complex. Two actors, who have appeared on the screens, actually come "on the scene." This is the first time that this kind of action appears in the Berlin group's work, where the ongoing scene undergoes a kind of estrangement from itself, even though we are in the theater, or at least in a theatrical device. On screen and on stage, the actors interpret two successive texts: a reconstruction of interviews between the hit man and the wife who ordered the hit (Bart Baele and Yves Degryse had no access to the procedurals of this confrontation); and extracts from a "theater play", *Dans la solitude des champs de coton* (Inn the solitude of the cotton fields) by Bernard-Marie Koltès.

First produced in 1987 by Patrice Chéreau and quickly elevated to a contemporary classic, Koltès' play puts on stage a dealer and a client without us ever knowing the object of their business, although numerous interpretations have been given ranging from drugs to the metaphor of desire. Dialogue is built based on extensive intercrossing monologues. The often long and complex sentences reflect the situation rather than making it explicit: they do not transform, truly, into a narrative. Used in relation to the images of the fait divers, the excerpts from Koltès' play cre-

ate a clear discrepancy, a kind of detachment from the event through fiction. We are then in a theater traversed by a visual installation and video, court testimony, a fictional interview and a literary text. We're in a theater that performs the passage of a body from one screen to another and from one screen to the stage, the passage of the word of a specialist to that of a writer. We are placed in the position of knowing a fait divers, abstracting the motivations of it, of understanding the incompatibility of legal rules of two neighboring member countries of the European Union, which require this absurd and grotesque confrontation within both a single and divided locale - a farm with two addresses crossed by a border. In the same gesture, the performance gives a didactic lesson and provokes a surprising void, disseminating objects and reconstructing facts, working on a story borrowed from reality and opening a metaphorical space: a diverse mixture of the elaboration of the real aiming to educate and modify our perceptual conditions and our ways of appropriating the world.

I would like to quickly turn to a last example that I have analyzed in detail in a previous work.<sup>6</sup> It deals with the work of Guy Cassiers, whose performances have been prominent on the European scene since 2006. This was also the year of his appointment as director of Toneelhuis d'Anvers, in Belgium, one of three municipal theaters in Flanders, where he developed a politics of plurality in the arts, a practice of his since his formation in Fine Arts (Académie des Beaux-Arts d'Anvers). Indeed, Cassiers began his career as a director during the 1980s, organizing student parties that often turned into true artistic performances. His visual musical and plastic theater is situated at the crossroads of the performance arts in a spirit of collective creation that he will undoubtedly follow forever. Thus, in Toneelhuis, Cassiers has installed, at the center of the institution, a collective artistic core gathering dance, film, video, music and theater, with associated artists such as the performer Benjamin Verdonck; the collective Olympique Dramatique; author, playwright, director and poet Bart Meuleman; the author and actress Abke Haring; and the choreographer Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui. For its programming and production, the Toneelhuis can certainly be called traversed theater. As for the creations for which Cassiers himself is responsible for the staging, they demonstrate, to a rare degree, an extreme attention to literary composition, in particular to novelistic language

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<sup>6</sup> Here, I refer to an article written with Chloé Larmert, "Guy Cassiers: les images entravées" (Bident; Lamert, 2014, p. 42-48).

(Lowry, Proust, Musil...), as well as an amazing virtuosity in handling visual and audio devices. Clearly there is a Cassiers signature: each production profoundly modifies the modes of presentation of these creative alliances. However, some constants are to be found. The actors' voices are sonorized. Cassiers puts cameras everywhere in the scenic box to spread out his images (the actors' faces, details of set design...) on large screens installed at the back or on a part of the stage. The projections are handled live by operators, and the actors themselves, benefiting from a control monitor, can dialogue with them, thus contributing twice to the construction of the image. In effect, these images do not allow spectators to look on passively. They look at one another and look at us. Each participant, from every angle - director, actor, technician, spectator - activate and enter the images. Obstacles are created between the images, and yet they seem to acquire a new freedom. They tend to dematerialize bodies that, however, resuscitate and manipulate the images. They overwhelm a text whose sonorous and vocal force devours them. Cassiers intends to make the audience work, to create its own perspectives and perceptions. At first, spectators follow a movement of decomposition - to apprehend this or that element as something separate, extract it from its context, give it details - next, there is a second of restoration of an intrigue that will run parallel to the main intrigue of the play. Cassiers seeks to stimulate the inventiveness of the public, especially working leitmotifs in order to activate the memories of the spectators and to allow the rapprochements and selectivity that construct plural meanings. The thousands of pages of Proust, Woolf, Lowry are condensed into a performance of some few hours, sometimes about 10, such as the *Marathon Musil*; this, however, always requires a selection, a montage, a process of highlighting, a breakdown, and a recomposition. Each textual elaboration encounters a scenic and technological development. This encounter, which traverses the theater, proposes a new distribution, or sharing, to the spectator, a new conception of the legible and the sensible. It is not inconsequential that Cassier locates his work politically: simultaneously by the registration of certain creations in a series like the one he had called the *Triptych of Power*; his choice of novel-world creators of European consciousness; and the resonance of his artistic enterprise (his artistic creation, his direction of Toneelhuis) in a city where Flemish nationalist extremists regularly flirt with half of all voters.

Deliberately chosen for their difference, but without that choice presupposing any depletion, these three contemporary theatrical experiences combine dimensions ranging from the social to the philosophical, the literary to the legal and the technological to the political that require an anthropological reading. This is not solely a matter of grasping the theatrical, or one might say the performative fact, within its environment as a "total social fact," although this is always necessary. Neither is it a question of resuming a discursive mode that is never completely unlinked from its colonizing and narcissistic posture. I would like, with this reading, to refer to Eduardo Viveiros de Castro's *Metafísicas canibais* (Cannibal Metaphysics).<sup>7</sup> In this work, the Brazilian anthropologist performs a radical gesture, both anthropological and meta-anthropological, producing what he calls an "inverted anthropology" which truly and completely opens up to the categories of people it takes for objects, thus considering their ideas and concepts to produce thought capable of reading the thoughts of others and, therefore, ours. The book operates a deconstruction of Levi-Strauss's 1962 double device in *Totemism Today* (*Le totémisme aujourd'hui*) and *The Savage Mind* (*La pensée sauvage*) in order to detect a trend or rather a poststructuralist haunting trepidation in his work. He thus opposes the declared multiculturalism of Western anthropology to the cannibal multinaturalism of Tupi conceptions [a large Brazilian indigenous nation]. The opposition is both one of comprehension and extension. Among the pairs of opposites that Viveiros de Castro rejects, one paradigm seems to me most decisive: that of representation and perspective. Multiculturalism cannot operate by a process differentiated from the recognition that it operates through representation, which means that the other remains integrated into a system. Multinaturalism is therefore a perspectivism. It turns every animal (in particular each predator) into a person and assigns each sacrificial or shamanic act a transformative virtue beyond all fiction. Thus, Viveiros de Castro can claim, "a perspective is not a representation" and add "perspective is not a representation because representations are properties of the mind, while the point of view is in the body."

It is this corporal point of view that the BR-3 dislocations, the devices of the Berlin group and the literary, visual and sound texts of Cassiers activate. They are not intended to produce, with the spectators, representations, but rather more properly

<sup>7</sup> All quotes from this book here are taken from the French translation (Oïara Bonilla) of Viveiros de Castro's text (Viveiros de Castro, 2009, respectively p/ 53, 39 and 194).

perspectives: perceptual slips, conceptual disconnections, disaffiliations, de-narcissifications, dis-multifications. Proceeding in this way, they reinforce the properly theatrical aspect of theater, founded on exchange. They multiply these exchanges of views between cities, between individual lives, margins and borders, among books, among bodies (more precisely: between assassin and victim in *Marathon Musil*, between man and woman within the same body, in *Orlando*, to refer back to Cassier's work). They release what Viveiros de Castro names as "an endless circulation of perspectives" - "exchange by exchange, metamorphosis by metamorphosis, point of view on point of view, i.e.: becoming." They are not intended to teach any class, but rather to put into action, each in a different way, Jacques Rancière's concept of the "ignorant teacher," a concept that he sees very little evidenced in performative creation. These corporal points of view promote new processes of subjectivization. And if they introduce a theater in an "expanded field," it is precisely to traverse, *without rest*, through a multitude of knowledges and of savors and experiencing subjects.

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